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## PRESIDENT BUCHANAN'S PROPOSED INTERVENTION IN MEXICO

DURING President Buchanan's administration Mexico was in the usual chronic state of revolution ; before the close of this period civil discord brought this republic to the very verge of ruin. Two parties had grown up which were bitterly opposed to one another, and which became involved in a struggle for the control of the government. The Conservative party was closely connected with the Church and was favorable to absolute government ; the Constitutional party claimed to represent the people and was covetous of the enormous wealth still remaining to the Church.

In 1857 a so-called Constituent Congress adopted a constitution and provided for a popular election, under which General Comonfort was chosen President, and in December he was inaugurated President of the republic in the city of Mexico. Within a month General Comonfort was overthrown by General Zuloaga, who in turn was declared President by his faction. The entire diplomatic corps, including the minister of the United States, recognized the government of Zuloaga as the *de facto* government of Mexico.

The Constitution of 1857 provided that in the absence of the President his duties should fall to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Accordingly the Chief Justice, General Benito Juarez, a full-blooded Indian, but a man of great ability and patriotism, withdrew with a scanty following to Guanajuato and set up a "Constitutional Government." He soon succeeded in establishing himself at Vera Cruz, and all the northern and southern provinces acknowledged his jurisdiction. General Zuloaga's authority waned even in the capital, and eventually General Miramon became the leader and head of the Conservative government.<sup>1</sup>

In the midst of these turmoils, life and property in Mexico were no longer safe. In vain did the minister of the United States demand protection for his fellow-citizens, and seek indemnities for past injuries.<sup>2</sup> Claims estimated at more than \$10,000,000, based upon the violation of an express provision in the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and gross injuries to the persons and property of Amer-

<sup>1</sup> For the political condition of Mexico during this time see H. H. Bancroft's *History of the Pacific States*, Vol. VIII., Mexico, Vol. V., p. 646 *et seqq.*

<sup>2</sup> President Buchanan's second annual message, December 6, 1858.

ican citizens, arose.<sup>1</sup> Murder, plunder and imprisonment of citizens of the United States by different parties claiming and exercising local jurisdiction were frequent. American citizens could not visit Mexico without imminent danger.<sup>2</sup>

A few selected and well established facts will show the intolerable nature of this rule of anarchy. An American named Crabbe and his associates were executed without trial in Sonora; four sick Americans, who had taken refuge in the house of an American within the territory of the United States, were seized and murdered; General Marquez, who was in the service of the government of Miramon, seized three American physicians in the hospital at Tacubaya, while they were attending the sick and dying of both parties, and executed them without trial. Ormund Chase was seized by Marquez at Tepic and shot on the 7th of August, 1859, and his friends could not even conjecture the cause of his arrest.<sup>3</sup>

In his third annual message President Buchanan said: "Outrages of the worst description are committed both upon persons and property. There is scarcely any form of injury which has not been suffered by our citizens in Mexico during the last few years. We have been nominally at peace with that Republic, but 'so far as the interests of our commerce, or of our citizens who have visited the country as merchants, shipmasters, or in other capacities, are concerned, we might as well have been at war.' Life has been insecure, property unprotected, and trade impossible except at a risk of loss which prudent men can not be expected to incur. Important contracts, involving large expenditures, entered into by the central Government, have been set at defiance by the local governments. Peaceful American residents, occupying their rightful possessions, have been suddenly expelled the country, in defiance of treaties and by the mere force of arbitrary power. . . . Vessels of the United States have been seized without law, and a consular officer who protested against such seizure has been fined and imprisoned for disrespect to the authorities. Military contributions have been levied in violation of every principle of right, and the American who resisted the lawless demand has had his property forcibly taken away and has been himself banished." The various European governments made similar complaints.<sup>4</sup> Neither party was humane; but the Conservatives

<sup>1</sup> President Buchanan's second annual message, December 6, 1858.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Senate Exec. Doc.*, 36th Congress, first session, Vol. I., pp. 36-50.

<sup>4</sup> See Lord Russell's despatch to George B. Mathew, August 24, 1860 (*Brit. and For. St. Pap.*, LI. 548), and Mathew's despatch to Russell, September 28, 1860 (*St. Pap.*, 1861, Vol. LXV.); also the French ambassador's despatch to the captain-general of Cuba, April 29, 1861 (*Archives Diplomatiques*, Tome III., 1862, pp. 286-287.)

were especially unfriendly to the United States, and consequently they treated American citizens harshly, and even brutally.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to claims for damages to persons and property, our government had grievances against Mexico for not restraining large bands of hostile and predatory Indians from roaming freely over the Mexican states of Chihuahua and Sonora and the adjoining territories of the United States; and our southern frontier was kept in a constant state of alarm by lawless bands of Mexicans crossing the border and committing depredations on our remote settlers. It was alleged that the local governments of these Mexican states were perfectly helpless and were themselves terrorized by the Indians. Life and property were insecure on our frontier, and anarchy and violence prevailed; settlement of the country was arrested, and the stage and postal communication established between the Atlantic and Pacific was in danger of being destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

The gravity of the situation was shown in 1858 in a controversy between the Mexican government and our minister, John Forsyth.<sup>3</sup> The Mexican government had issued a decree on May 15, levying a certain tax on capital whether held by Mexicans or foreigners. Forsyth formally protested against it and advised his countrymen not to pay the contribution, but to allow it to be forcibly exacted.<sup>4</sup> Notwithstanding this protest, when Mr. Solomon Migel, a citizen of the United States, refused to pay, he was ordered to leave the country within three days. The Mexican government understood that the refusal of Mr. Migel to comply with the decree was really the act of the diplomatic agent of the United States, and it was warned that if it proceeded to carry out the decree of banishment, it would "take the step upon the peril of its responsibility to the sovereignty of the United States."<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, Mr. Migel was banished, and thereupon Forsyth suspended diplomatic relations with the Conservative government.<sup>6</sup>

This episode led to grave consequences, for Forsyth was upheld by President Buchanan and was instructed not to renew the relations thus broken off, but to withdraw the legation of the United States from the Republic. President Buchanan was resolved to

<sup>1</sup> See Forsyth's despatch, No. 80, to Cass, June 25, 1858. *Senate Ex. Docs.*, 35th Cong., second session, Vol. I.

<sup>2</sup> President Buchanan's second and third annual messages.

<sup>3</sup> Forsyth to Cass, No. 79, June 19, 1858, and Cass to Forsyth, No. 49, July 15, 1858. *Sen. Ex. Docs.*, 35th Cong., second session, Vol. I.

<sup>4</sup> Forsyth to Cass, No. 78, June 17, 1858, and A with No. 78. *Sen. Ex. Docs.*, 35th Cong., second session, Vol. I.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Forsyth to Cass, No. 79, June 19, 1858. *Sen. Ex. Docs.*, 35th Cong., second session, Vol. I.

adopt a new policy.<sup>1</sup> Cass wrote to Forsyth : " Your action upon this occasion, and the circumstances attending it, have led the President to consider the condition of Mexico, and the state of our relations with that country. Both are equally unsatisfactory. The government at the capital has neglected the just complaints of the United States, and evinced no disposition whatever to redress the injuries that have been committed upon the persons and property of our citizens. Your previous efforts upon this subject have failed, and the reports received from you indicate little expectation of a favorable change, till the United States, to adopt your own language, shall give striking evidence of their will and power to protect their citizens." <sup>2</sup>

After the withdrawal of the American legation, President Buchanan sent a special agent to Mexico,<sup>3</sup> with instructions to study the political condition of the country, the strength of the Constitutional government and such other matters as would aid the President in shaping his policy with reference to Mexico. Upon the strength of the report of this agent, a new minister was sent to Mexico, with discretionary powers to recognize the Constitutional government at Vera Cruz, if upon his arrival in Mexico he should find the report of the special agent confirmed by his own observation, and that government entitled to recognition according to the established practice of the United States.<sup>4</sup>

Even before diplomatic relations with the Conservative government ceased, it was thought that the Constitutional party would be less unfriendly to the United States and more ready to redress the grievances of American citizens ;<sup>5</sup> after the rupture, the hostility of General Miramon to the United States, and the continued outrages against our citizens committed by his supporters led President Buchanan to conclude that the only hope of a satisfactory adjustment of our relations with Mexico, was the recognition and tacit support of General Juarez.<sup>6</sup> Hence Mr. Robert McLane, the newly appointed minister to this mission, soon after his arrival in Mexico presented his credentials to President Juarez.<sup>7</sup>

As early as 1858, President Buchanan had foreshadowed a determined policy with reference to Mexico ; he declared that

<sup>1</sup> It should be stated that the published correspondence between our ministers to Mexico and the Department of State is very meagre.

<sup>2</sup> Cass to Forsyth, No. 49, July 15, 1858. *Sen. Ex. Docs.*, 35th Cong., second session, Vol. I.

<sup>3</sup> President Buchanan's third annual message, December 19, 1859.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> President Buchanan's second annual message, December 6, 1858.

<sup>6</sup> President Buchanan's third and fourth annual messages.

Third annual message.

abundant cause existed for a resort to hostilities against the Conservative government, but that the success of the Constitutional party appeared to offer hopes of a peaceful adjustment of our difficulties with the country. "But for this expectation, I should at once have recommended to Congress to grant the necessary power to the President to take possession of a sufficient portion of the remote and unsettled territory of Mexico, to be held in pledge until our injuries shall be redressed and our just demands be satisfied."<sup>1</sup> It was therefore only an unfolding of his schemes when Buchanan adopted the conclusions of Forsyth and McLane as his own, that "Nothing but a manifestation of the power of the government of the United States and of its purpose to punish these wrongs will avail." He therefore took the very aggressive step of asking Congress for power to enter Mexico with the military forces of the government at the call of the Constitutional authorities, in order to protect American citizens and enforce the treaty rights of the United States.<sup>2</sup>

There was still another influence which caused Buchanan to take this step. He described the Mexican Government as a "wreck upon the ocean, drifting about as she is impelled by the different factions." Under these circumstances the President held that it was our duty as a good neighbor to extend to her a helping hand, and significantly added that, "If we do not, it would not be surprising should some other nation undertake the task, and thus force us to interfere at last, under circumstances of increased difficulty, for the maintenance of our established policy." In the light of later events, it is interesting to note that President Buchanan either had a strong conviction that it was the true policy of the United States to intervene in Mexico, or else he held up before the American people the probable European intervention to justify and excuse his own policy towards Mexico. Later, in speaking of the refusal of Congress to give him power to use the military forces of the United States in Mexico, he said: "European Governments would have been deprived of all pretext to interfere in the territorial and domestic concerns of Mexico. We should thus have been relieved from the obligation of resisting, even by force, should this become necessary, any attempt by these Governments to deprive our neighboring Republic of portions of her territory—a duty from which we could not shrink without abandoning the traditional and established policy of the American people."<sup>3</sup> The only European sovereign whom

<sup>1</sup> Second annual message.

<sup>2</sup> Third annual message.

<sup>3</sup> Fourth annual message.

the President suspected of a desire to interfere in Mexico was the Emperor of the French. The French minister exercised great influence over General Miramon, and shortly before this Napoleon III. had directed his attention in a special manner to Central America. "The President, therefore, watched his proceedings with constant vigilance, under the conviction that should he attempt to colonize the whole or any portion of Mexico, this would almost necessarily involve the United States in a war with France in vindication of the Monroe Doctrine."<sup>1</sup>

The presence of two rival governments increased the difficulty of rendering any effective assistance in establishing a stable government in Mexico. The Constitutional government was well disposed towards the United States, but its authority was not acknowledged by the central provinces around the city of Mexico, and consequently it was powerless to act for the whole country. The Conservative government was unfriendly, almost defiant towards the United States, and it could not be reached by a military force except by passing through territory occupied by the Constitutional government. The President was of the opinion that the necessary consent and even the aid of that party could be obtained. But however that might be, he considered it the duty of the government of the United States to protect our citizens in their just rights secured by treaty. Therefore, he recommended that Congress "pass a law authorizing the President, under such conditions as they may deem expedient, to employ a sufficient military force to enter Mexico for the purpose of obtaining indemnity for the past and security for the future."<sup>2</sup> . . . "Such an accession to the forces of the Constitutional government would enable it soon to reach the City of Mexico and extend its power over the whole Republic. In that event there is no reason to doubt that the just claims of our citizens would be satisfied and adequate redress obtained for the injuries inflicted upon them."<sup>3</sup>

Disturbances on the boundary between our country and Mexico added to the grievances already enumerated, and for these Buchanan had equally drastic measures. In 1858 he advised Congress to take the necessary steps to assume a temporary protectorate over

<sup>1</sup> *Buchanan's Administration*, pp. 275-276.

<sup>2</sup> This recommendation recalls Jackson's message to Congress, February 6, 1837. The Mexican government had for some time ignored the claims of the United States for damages to the property and injuries to the persons of American citizens; finally Jackson asked Congress for authority to enforce the demands of the United States by the military power of the government, but Congress was not willing to invest the President with power to make offensive war against Mexico.

<sup>3</sup> Third annual message.

the states of Chihuahua and Sonora by establishing military posts within these states, in order to restrain the predatory bands of Indians.<sup>1</sup> The next year this recommendation was repeated.<sup>2</sup>

Both of Buchanan's remedies came to naught because Congress was not prepared to authorize intervention in the domestic affairs of a neighboring state;<sup>3</sup> thereupon he worked out another method of accomplishing the same objects. McLane, the accredited minister of the United States to the Constitutional government, was instructed to negotiate a treaty with that government.<sup>4</sup> The precise nature of McLane's instructions will never be known until our State Department permits the publication of the correspondence between Mexico and the United States, during this period; but the resulting treaty has been published, and from it we can get an understanding of what the administration was willing to accept, though by no means what it desired, in the adjustment of our relations with Mexico.

On December 14, 1859, McLane concluded with the government of Juárez a treaty of "transit and commerce," and a "convention to enforce treaty stipulations;"<sup>5</sup> and on January 4, 1860, the President submitted this treaty to the Senate for ratification.<sup>6</sup> It was published in the *National Intelligencer*, February 18, 1860, apparently through the indiscretion of some senator. It is an important landmark in our relations with Mexico. The treaty of "transit and commerce" only indirectly provided for intervention; but it gave to the United States a privileged status which must result in a controlling influence over the political and commercial affairs of Mexico. The "convention to enforce treaty stipulations" provided for direct intervention under certain conditions.

By the treaty of "transit and commerce" Mexico ceded to the United States in perpetuity the right of way across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec from ocean to ocean by any kind of road, with the understanding that both republics were to enjoy the use of the same. As soon as any route across the isthmus was established, the republic of Mexico agreed to provide a port of deposit at each ter-

<sup>1</sup> Second annual message.

<sup>2</sup> Third annual message.

<sup>3</sup> "These recommendations of the President were wholly disregarded by Congress during the session of 1859-1860. Indeed they were not even noticed in any of its proceedings. The members of both parties were too exclusively occupied in discussing the slavery question, and in giving their attention to the approaching presidential election to devote any portion of their time to the important Mexican question." Nor did the next annual message of December, 1860, receive any more attention than the previous ones (*Buchanan's Administration*, pp. 274-275).

<sup>4</sup> Fourth annual message.

<sup>5</sup> *Exec. Journal of U. S. Senate*, XI. 115.

<sup>6</sup> Fourth annual message.



minus, and no duty was to be levied by the Mexican government on foreign goods passing over the route, except such as were intended for consumption in Mexico. The mails of the United States were to pass over the route free of all charges, provided they were in closed bags and not intended for distribution along the road.

Our government was given the right to transport troops, military stores, and munitions of war by the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and by a route from the city of Guaymas on the Gulf of California to some suitable point on the boundary between the United States and Mexico near the one hundred and eleventh degree of longitude west from Greenwich.

Mexico also ceded to the United States in perpetuity the right of way over any railroad, or route of communication at that time existing, or to be constructed, from the cities Camargo and Matamoras, or any suitable point on the Rio Grande, in the state of Tamaulipas, *via* Monterey, to Mazatlan on the Gulf of California, and from Rancho de Nogales or any suitable point on the boundary between Mexico and the United States near the one hundred and eleventh degree of longitude west from Greenwich to the Gulf of California in the state of Sonora.

All the stipulations and regulations with reference to the transit across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec were extended to the other routes, except the right of transporting troops, military stores, and munitions of war over them. The Mexican Republic reserved the right of sovereignty over all of the routes specified in the treaty.

Both republics agreed to protect these transits and to guarantee the neutrality of the same. Moreover, Mexico agreed to employ her military forces, if at any time it should become necessary to protect the persons and property passing over any of the routes mentioned; but it was further stipulated that "upon failure to do this from any cause whatever, the Government of the United States may, with the consent or at the request of the Government of Mexico, or the minister thereof at Washington, or of the competent legally appointed local authorities, civil or military, employ such force for this and for no other purpose; and when, in the opinion of the Government of Mexico, the necessity ceases, such force shall be immediately withdrawn."

"In the exceptional case, however, of uniform or imminent danger to the lives or property of citizens of the United States, the forces of the said Republic are authorized to act for their protection without such consent having been previously obtained; and such forces shall be withdrawn when the necessity for this employment ceases."

In consideration of the privileges granted by Mexico to the United States, the government of the United States agreed to pay to the government of Mexico the sum of four millions of dollars, of which two millions were to be paid immediately upon the exchange of ratifications of the treaty, and the remaining two millions were to be retained by our government for the payment of claims of citizens of the United States against Mexico.<sup>1</sup>

The conventional articles to enforce treaty stipulations, maintain order, etc., were the most remarkable features of the treaty; if they had been ratified by the United States Senate, a radical departure from the traditional policy of our government, not to interfere in the domestic concerns of other nations, would have been made.

Article I. provided that "If any of the stipulations of existing treaties between Mexico and the United States are violated, or the safety and security of the citizens of either Republic are endangered within the territory of the other, and the legitimate and acknowledged government thereof may be unable from any cause, to enforce such stipulations or to provide for such safety and security, it shall be obligatory on that government to seek the aid of the other in maintaining their due execution, as well as order and security in the territory of that Republic where such violation and discord occur; and in every such special case the expenses shall be paid by the Treasury of the nation within whose territory such intervention may become necessary; and if disorder shall occur on the frontier of the two Republics, the authorities of the two Republics nearest the place where the disorder exists shall act in concert and co-operation for the arrest and punishment of criminals who have disturbed the public order and security of either Republic, and for this purpose the parties guilty of these offenses may be arrested within either Republic and delivered over to the authorities of that Republic within which the crime may have been committed; the nature and character of such intervention as well as the expense thereof, and the manner of arresting and subjecting to punishment the said criminals, shall be determined and regulated by an agreement between the executive branches of the two governments."

The reason given in the preamble for this extraordinary provision, is that the existing civil war in Mexico and the disturbed condition of the inland frontier of Mexico and the United States may make it necessary for the two republics to act in concert with

<sup>1</sup> The eighth article of the treaty of 1853 between the United States and Mexico contains provisions similar to those enumerated above. The stipulations in the "treaty of transit and commerce" with reference to the United States mails, the transportation of troops, and the protection of the routes are somewhat similar to those in the treaty of 1853. *Treaties and Conventions*, ed. 1889, p. 697.

their military forces in order to enforce treaty stipulations and maintain order.<sup>1</sup>

On the same day that Forsyth concluded the treaty and convention with the Juarez government, he wrote to the Secretary of State that it was only after he had given the Constitutional authorities to understand that the United States would enforce the fulfillment of treaty stipulations by the military power of the government, whether the convention was signed or not, that the Minister of Relations consented to sign it.

The President submitted the treaty to the Senate January 4, 1860, and from that time till May 31, it went through the usual form, receiving attention from time to time in the executive sessions of the Senate.<sup>2</sup> On May 31, it was seriously considered. The provision which appears to have received most attention had nothing to do with the intervention features of the treaty, but related to reciprocal trade in the natural and manufactured products of the two republics. When the final vote was taken, eighteen senators voted for ratification and twenty-seven against it.<sup>3</sup> "So it was resolved, That the Senate do not advise and consent to ratification of the treaty of transit and commerce between the United States of America and the Mexican Republic, dated at Vera Cruz, December 14, 1859."<sup>4</sup>

After the decision was announced, Mr. Simmons of Rhode Island moved that the vote of the Senate be reconsidered, and it was ordered that this motion be postponed until the next day.<sup>5</sup> It

<sup>1</sup> The full text of the treaty was published in the *Daily National Intelligencer* of February 18, 1860, and also in the *New York Times*. I have not been able to find it in any printed public document.

<sup>2</sup> *Executive Journal of the U. S. Senate*, XI. 115, 116, 126, 127, 135, 146, 152, 153, 154, 156, 158, 192-199.

<sup>3</sup> Those who voted in the affirmative were Messrs. Bragg of N. C., Clingman of N. C., Davis of Miss., Fitch of Ind., Fitzpatrick of Ala., Green of Mo., Gwin of Cal., Hemphill of Tex., Johnson of Ark., Johnson of Tenn., Lane of Or., Mason of Va., Polk of Mo., Powell of Ky., Pugh of O., Rice of Minn., Sebastian of Ark., and Toombs of Ga.

Those who voted in the negative were Messrs. Anthony of R. I., Bigler of Pa., Bingham of Mich., Brown of Miss., Cameron of Pa., Chandler of Mich., Clark of N. H., Collamer of Vt., Doolittle of Wis., Fessenden of Me., Foote of Vt., Foster of Conn., Grimes of Ia., Hale of N. H., Hammond of S. C., Harlan of Ia., Hunter of Va., King of N. Y., Pearce of Ind., Seward of N. J., Simmons of R. I., Slidell of La., Sumner of Mass., Trumbull of Ill., Wade of O., Wilkinson of Minn., and Wilson of Mass.

Of the eighteen who voted in the affirmative, all were Democrats; four belonged to the Northern States. Of the twenty-seven who voted in the negative, twenty-one were Republicans and six were Democrats; five of the Democrats belonged to states south of the Mason and Dixon line. See *Cong. Globe*, 36th Cong., first session, Part I.; also *Ex. Journal of the U. S. Senate*, XI. 199.

<sup>4</sup> *Ex. Journal of the U. S. Senate*, XI. 199.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

was not, however, till June 27 that Simmons's motion was again taken up; on that day it was agreed to reconsider by a vote of twenty-six to fifteen. Senator Wilson of Massachusetts then moved that the further consideration of the treaty be postponed to the first Monday of the next December.<sup>1</sup> When Congress met in December the country was too much excited over secession and slavery to again take up the Mexican treaty, and consequently, June 27, 1860, was the last time that the Senate considered this remarkable treaty.<sup>2</sup>

Naturally enough Miramon protested against the treaty which would have led to the early overthrow of his government and the establishment of the authority of the Constitutional government over all Mexico. Hence two protests were filed: one by O. Muñon Lea, Miramon's Minister of Relations, and another by Miramon himself. Both throw light upon the preceding negotiations.

Mr. Lea protested on the ground that such a treaty would lead to new complications, and therefore prolong the civil war in Mexico; that it would be dishonorable for the United States to take advantage of the weakness of Mexico to secure the acquisition of territory, or the grant of a transit route across Mexico; and that, even if the Constitutional government were the *de facto* government of Mexico, President Juarez had no authority to make a treaty granting away territory, or a transit route, because the Mexican Constitution expressly declared that, "it is ordained that only to Congress belongs the power to approve treaties, compacts, or diplomatic conventions and to grant or deny the entrance of foreign troops into the territory of the federation." The protest also set forth that when the government of Miramon was installed in January, 1858, it was at once recognized by the Minister of the United States, who in March of the same year presented a plan of a treaty for a new boundary line between the two republics. This involved a considerable loss of territory to Mexico, and other regulations of great importance. The Minister of Relations declined to accept this proposition, because such a treaty would excite domestic strife just when peace was the principal object of the Mexican government. "From that time Mr. Forsyth declared himself in open hostility to the Government, favored, as far as he was able, the enemies who were warring against it, broke off, without waiting for instructions from Washington, and without any ascertained cause, the relations existing between the two countries, and did not leave the Republic until, wearied with so many fruitless efforts to break down the very Government he had recognized, he lost all hope of realizing his desires."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ex. Journal of the U. S. Senate*, XI. 199.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 228, 229. Schouler's *History of the U. S.*, V. 453, note.

<sup>3</sup> *National Daily Intelligencer*, January 16, 1860.

These insinuations must be taken with due allowance, but they undoubtedly show that our government failed to secure something that it greatly desired, presumably the cession of Mexican territory, and it is not at all unlikely that this was the real cause of the breach of diplomatic relations with the Miramon government, and the decision to recognize the government of Juarez as more favorable to the concessions desired by the administration.

General Miramon's personal protest practically repeats the same charges; it refers to Mr. Forsyth's efforts to secure a new boundary line between Mexico and the United States for a consideration and to the American minister's insistence "that they should avail themselves of this opportunity to gain a few millions of dollars in the existing strife; that is, in the war against the Constitutional forces. This proposition so unworthy of a nation was rejected in terms already known to the Republic."<sup>1</sup>

The McLane-Juarez treaty awakened great interest both in the United States and the leading countries of Europe, especially England, France and Spain. In the United States the North generally opposed the ratification of the treaty, while the South favored it, although there are notable exceptions to this statement.<sup>2</sup> There was an impression in the North that the policy of the administration with reference to Mexico was deliberately planned with a view to strengthening the slave power, and hence the treaty came to be a party question. Thus F. P. Blair in a letter to J. J. Crittenden expressed the belief that the whole scheme was one to secure more territory for slavery.<sup>3</sup>

A correspondent of the *New York Tribune* declared that the administration aimed at the ultimate absorption of Mexico by the United States in order to offset, politically, the growing greatness of the West, and to illustrate Calhoun's idea of equality in the Senate; that the slave section knew that the next census would reveal the comparative weakness of the South, and consequently they had contrived a plot by which they could increase their population and territory; and that this was the inspiration of the whole scheme. This correspondent thought that the political game in the treaty was the same as that played by President Polk.<sup>4</sup>

On January 10, 1860, the *National Intelligencer* devoted nearly three columns to a criticism of President Buchanan's Mexican pol-

<sup>1</sup> *Daily National Intelligencer*, February 9, 1860.

<sup>2</sup> See *supra*, p. 696. Memorials from citizens of New York and Chicago were presented to the Senate, favoring the ratification of the treaty. *Exec. Journal of the Senate*, XI. 152, 153.

<sup>3</sup> Coleman's *Crittenden*, II. 186.

<sup>4</sup> *New York Tribune*, February 28, 1860.

icy. It maintained that the use of our military forces in Mexico in concert with one of the warring factions, which was unable to establish its supremacy, was not only opposed to the general principles of public law, but also to our own theory of popular government; and that revolutions were so common in Mexico that, in order to maintain any kind of stable government there, it would be necessary to assure perpetual presence of American troops "as the armed Janissaries of some Mexican satrap."

A correspondent of the *Boston Courier*, who was described as being "peculiarly well informed on Mexican history and current politics," pointed out that Juarez was shut up in Vera Cruz and that only the frontier states acknowledged his government, while all of the rich and populous states of the interior acknowledged the government of General Miramon. Hence, he concluded that President Juarez could not make a treaty that was worth having; the one thing which Juarez needed most was money, and all that he could offer in exchange for money was territory; such a step would assure his downfall and establish Miramon's popularity. As to the Isthmus routes, neither of the rival governments could maintain a safe transit across any part of the republic.

While such a discussion was going on at home, the measure could not fail to attract attention in Europe. Foreigners foresaw the practical absorption of Mexico by the United States, and this at once aroused the commercial ambition of England, and the race prejudices and religious animosity of Spain and France.

No official expression on the subject from the government of Great Britain can be found in the published correspondence of either country, but the President's policy did not escape the notice of the *London Times*. On January 11, 1860, it predicted the annexation of a part of Mexico by the United States, and added, "In one sense this is a gain to humanity. Beautiful and fertile regions, now desert, will pass under the hands of the cultivator, mines will be worked, harbors will be filled with shipping, and a new life will animate that vast region. . . . Although we have not the slightest wish to interfere with the Americans, it is but right that an adequate force should be at hand to protect British interests in those quarters." On January 13, the *Times* once more took up the subject and commented at length on the President's policy, expressing approval and declaring that, "saving British interests, we should look on such a proceeding without the least dissatisfaction."

Quite different was the position taken by Spain. The Spaniards were intimately connected with the Mexicans by ties of blood and religion; the Spanish government naturally looked with jealousy

upon a proposition which would ultimately result in the extinction of an ancient Spanish province. Ever since 1858,<sup>1</sup> the government at Madrid had been urging France and England to unite with it in a joint intervention in Mexico. The powerful influence of the Church was on the side of the Conservative government in Mexico, while the Constitutional government confiscated the enormous revenues of the clerical orders and declared for religious liberty. These considerations together with the monarchical sympathies of the Conservative government, caused the Spanish government to throw the weight of its influence on that side and to look with uneasiness upon the favor shown to the government of Juarez by the United States.<sup>2</sup>

President Buchanan's Mexican policy excited a lively interest in the Spanish court, and the Spanish government redoubled its efforts to induce France and England to join with it in an intervention in Mexico for the purpose of putting an end to anarchy and of establishing a stable government, that is, of putting down the Constitutional government and supporting Miramon.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, on April 18, 1860, the Spanish Minister of State declared that "no people, and Spain less than any other, can consent to the absorption, or even the protectorate, or to the exclusive preponderance of any nation whatever over the vast and rich continent discovered and civilized by our ancestors."<sup>4</sup>

In a despatch to the Spanish ambassador at London urging the co-operation of England in a joint intervention in Mexico, the Spanish Minister of State points out that the McLane-Juarez treaty is prejudicial to the interests of England, and that if the treaty is ratified, it will produce complications which will affect not only Spain, but all commercial nations, because the great oceanic routes will be dominated by a people who preach the political and commercial exclusion of Europeans from America.<sup>5</sup>

It is difficult to ascertain just what the attitude of the French government was at this time toward the proposed American intervention in Mexico. No full official expression appears to have been published on the subject, and the *Moniteur*, the organ of the government, passes over the whole matter with a simple mention of the treaty. Perhaps Napoleon III. was too much engaged in European affairs to give due attention to political controversies in America. There is, however, some evidence that he considered intervention in

<sup>1</sup> *Archives Diplomatiques*, Tome III., 1862.

<sup>2</sup> *Archives Diplomatiques*, Tome III., 1862, pp. 271, 283, 284-286.

<sup>3</sup> *Archives Diplomatiques*, Tome III., 1862, pp. 211-213, 215.

<sup>4</sup> Calderon Collantes to M. Mon, April 18, 1860. *Archives Diplomatiques*, Tome III., 1862, p. 212.

<sup>5</sup> Calderon Collantes to the Spanish ambassador at London, May 11, 1860. *Archives Diplomatiques*, Tome III., 1862, p. 215.

Mexico,<sup>1</sup> but there is nothing to indicate that he was hostile to President Buchanan's plans ;<sup>2</sup> on the other hand he appears to have desired the friendly co-operation of the United States with England, Spain and France in the establishment of a permanent and responsible government in Mexico.<sup>3</sup> When the Spanish ambassador urged the French Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1860 to intervene in Mexico, he replied that they must wait until the Senate of the United States had approved or rejected the treaty made with President Juarez and that his government had decided to put off every resolution upon the subject until after the vote of the American Senate.<sup>4</sup>

It must be admitted that the situation in Mexico was intolerable ; it was inevitable that, sooner or later, some foreign power, or combination of powers should intervene, if security was not given to foreign residents and treaty obligations were not observed. Yet it should be borne in mind that the Constitutional government, under the leadership of the able and patriotic statesman Juarez, evinced a greater willingness and ability to restore order and settle all international disputes, than its rival, the Conservative government, under the leadership of the unscrupulous Miramon. Juarez was carrying on a desperate struggle against the privileged classes, who, rather than give up the least of their privileges, preferred to betray their country to a foreign prince. The principles for which Juarez fought met with a sympathetic response in the United States, and the success of his arms in 1860 gave him undisputed control over the whole of Mexico. What he needed was time to complete his reforms at home and to adjust the relations of his government with foreign governments. A little patience and friendly assistance from the governments which had undoubted claims against Mexico would, in all probability, have enabled such a leader to maintain a stable government based upon the will of the people and to settle amicably all controversies with foreign powers. It would be idle to speculate upon what would have been the course of events in Mexico had President Buchanan's intervention been carried out ; yet in the light of later events it appears altogether probable that the pretext for intervention by the three European powers would have been removed and our government would have been spared the humiliation of seeing its much-cherished and jealously guarded Monroe Doctrine rendered ineffective at a time when civil war necessarily weakened our foreign policy.

HOWARD LAFAYETTE WILSON.

<sup>1</sup> *Archives Diplomatiques*, Tome III., 1862, pp. 205-216.

<sup>2</sup> See *supra*, page 692.

<sup>3</sup> *Archives Diplomatiques*, Tome III., 1862, p. 223.

<sup>4</sup> M. Mon to M. Collantes, May 4, 1860. *Archives Diplomatiques*, Tome III., 1862, p. 214.